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AUTHOR Thomas, Susan
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of a project was to describe the dynamics of attitude and behavior change with implications for vocational education. Secondary purposes were to determine and document efforts of various states and agencies relating to sex equity and to formulate a series of recommendations concerning equity programs in vocational education in Florida. Methods used included a review of theories and research relating to change and a survey of equity problems in eight southeastern states. Many useful resources were also identified during this identification process. A survey of equity concerns of the vocational directors in Florida was conducted which included assessment of their perceptions of successfulness of various programs and strategies. Results from these procedures were used to develop a set of recommendations relating to equity programs. These recommendations are presented in the findings and analysis section of the paper. Strategies and activities for implementing sex equity are listed and briefly discussed. Findings are presented in a series of five products available separately through ERIC--see note. (YLB)

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Final Report

Project No. DVE 9-1016

From March 1, 1979 to June 30, 1980

The Implementation of Change: Implications for Policies and Procedures Relating to Sex Bias and Discrimination in Vocational Education

Department of Home & Family Life
College of Home Economics
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida

Dr. Susan Thomas
Project Director

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Product 3:
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Product 4:
Recommendations for Acceptance of Equity Programs

Product 5:
Research Report: Perceptions of Equity Concerns among
Vocational Education Directors

Abstract

Equity in vocational education is mandated by the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 as well as other federal and state legislation. Based on the above laws, policies and techniques have been and are being designed to overcome sex bias and other discriminatory practices. Development of guidelines, programs, and strategies does not ensure acceptance and implementation of these recommendations. An important consideration to be addressed is the question: How does change take place and how may it be facilitated?

The purposes of the present project were to describe the dynamics of attitude and behavior change with implications for vocational education; to survey existing equity programs to determine target groups, objectives, and strategies of the program; to survey vocational directors to determine their perceptions of various equity concerns; and to formulate a series of recommendations concerning equity programs in vocational education. A series of five products were developed. These include 1) Techniques of Behavior Change: A Review of Theories and Research, 2) Review of Successful Equity Programs, 3) Resources for the Implementation of Equity Programs, and 4) Recommendations for Acceptance of Equity Programs, and 5) Research Report: Perceptions of Equity Concerns among Vocational Education Directors.

Introduction

Under the Vocational Amendments of 1976, all states must specify policies and procedures to be followed that ensure equal access to vocational education. In addition, the providers of vocational education must take action to comply with the law or risk losing their federal funds.

For the purposes of the Amendments, sex bias is defined as "behavior resulting from the assumption that one sex is superior to the other." Sex stereotyping is defined as "attributed behaviors, abilities, interests, values and roles to a person or group of persons on the basis of their sex." Sex discrimination is defined as "any action which limits or denies a person or group of persons opportunities, privileges, roles or rewards on the basis of their sex." Other potentially discriminatory practices would include reverse discrimination (e.g., a situation in which women are given special privileges, roles, or rewards on the basis of their sex), and discrimination on the basis of race and/or national origin.

On the state level, concern is also evident for the elimination of sex bias and other forms of discriminatory practices. Within the Division of Vocational Education, there is a full-time position as the Sex Equity Coordinator, as mandated by the Vocational Amendments of 1976. In addition, the Florida Committee on Equal Opportunities acts as a task force with respect to these issues.

At the present time studies are being underaken to design guidelines for the evaluation of policies and procedures designed to identify, overcome, and eliminate sex bias and other discriminatory practices in vocational education programs in various counties in Florida. However, development of such a set of criteria and guidelines does not ensure acceptance and implementation of the recommendations. An important consideration for any new procedure or program is the question: How does change take place and how may it be facilitated?

The primary purpose of this project was to describe the dynamics of change: how it occurs, what variables should be considered, and how it may be facilitated. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine and document the efforts of various states and agencies relating to sex equity. Since many good and effective programs have already been developed in other states, it is important that programs in Florida be built upon these program rather than going through a searching and trial-and-error process.

Based on the review of research, theory, equity programs in other states and perceptions of vocational directors in Florida, recommendations were made concerning strategies to facilitate sex equity in vocational education.

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To conduct an extensive review of the literature to:
    a) provide a fundamental understanding of the dynamics of changing human behavior, with an emphasis on the implications for vocational education programs.

b) survey the scope and potential implications of the facilitation and acceptance of change relating to sex bias and other discriminatory practices in vocational education programs.

2. To identify successful programs, policies and strategies developed by other states and agencies to identify, overcome and eliminate sex bias and other discriminatory practices in vocational education.
3. To determine the equity concerns and perceptions of potential success of various techniques as identified in objective 2 held by directors of vocational education in Florida.
4. To compile a list of recommendations for the facilitators and acceptance of change in the various areas of vocational education.

Methods

This section presents the procedures that were designed to meet the specific objectives listed above. The first task involved an extensive review of theories and research relating to attitude and behavior change. Five diverse approaches were identified: 1) learning approaches, 2) cognitive approaches, 3) functional approaches, 4) social influence approaches, and 5) structure-process-attitude intervention. For each of these five approaches, the theory was reviewed briefly and selected research relating to that approach was summarized. Suggestions were also made

as to how each approach might be useful in implementing equity within vocational education. Product 1, "Techniques of Behavior Change: A Review of Theories and Research" in included in Appendix A.

The second task involved a survey of equity programs to determine what types of activities are successful, and under what conditions. To accomplish this objective, several activities were completed. First, letters were written to the Sex Equity Coordinators in the eight southeasten states requesting information concerning equity activities in their states. Based on this information, directors of equity projects were contacted and requested to provide information about thier project in terms of target group, objectives, a brief summary of the program, and any information regarding program effectiveness that was available. Most project directors sent reports and the project staff abstracted the information. Complete project descriptions are included in Appendix A, Product 2, "Review of Successful Equity Programs."

Equity programs within Florida were also surveyed. The Sex Equity Coordinator for Florida provided information concerning several programs. Each program director was contacted by telephone and asked to provide the information descrived above. In addition, they were also asked to list any other equity program they knew of in Florida. Information concerning these programs is presented in Appendix A, Product 2.

During the process of identifying various equity programs and

obtaining information about many, many useful resources were identified. These are included in Appendix A, Product 3, "Resources for the Implementation of Equity Programs."

The third objective dealt with a survey of the equity concerns of vocational directors in Florida, and their perceptions of successfulness of various programs and strategies relating to equity. A survey instrument was designed using a modified Delphi technique. A 12% random sample of vocational directors was contacted by telephone and asked to list what they believed to be important equity concerns. They were also asked to suggest types of equity programs that might be successful in their districts. They were also asked to react to the potential success of various programs and strategies used elsewhere.

Based on the above input, a survey was designed and sent to all vocational directors in Florida in early April, 1980. Approximately two weeks later, a follow-up letter and a second copy of the questionnaire were sent to the non-respondents.

Completed surveys were received by 56 or 84% of the group. Results are presented and discussed in Product 5, "Research Report: Perceptions of Equity Concerns among Vocational Education Directors."

The final objective concerned a set of recommendations relating to equity programs. These recommendations were based on the review of theory and research relating to attitude and behavior change, information about various equity programs, and results from the statewide survey of vocational education directors.

These results are presented in Appendix A, Product 4, "Recommendations for Acceptance of Equity Programs."

Findings and Analysis

Because of the nature of the projects, the findings are presented in a series of products which are included in the appendix. Since some of the products are resource materials, only the recommendations are included here.

Florida's vocational education directors were surveyed and asked to indicate which strategies and activities they perceived to be potentially successful for implementing sex equity in their districts. The following strategies were identified:

1. Emphasizing nonsexist career counseling.
2. Developing a career awareness program which emphasizes diverse career options for males and females.
3. Conducting a local needs assessment relating to sex equity.
4. Providing displays and bulletin boards with equity materials.
5. Holding in-service workshops on sex equity.
6. Developing a nonsexist student recruitment program.
7. Receiving help identifying and establishing networks and linkages to other sources of information.
8. Adding specially designed nonsexist materials to the curriculum.
9. Reviewing the current curriculum to determine whether it is free of sex bias.

10. Using a consultant to provide equity resources and information.
11. Reviewing current curriculum materials for potential sex bias.
12. Conducting conferences or seminars on sex equity.

The above activities are listed in the order of preference.

Another question on the survey dealt with types of assistance they would like in implementing sex equity programs. The following types of assistance are listed in the order of preference, with the first listed activities receiving the greatest number of requests.

1. Technical assistance for implementing sex equity programs.
2. Identified goals and objectives to achieve sex equity.
3. A state policy statement on sex equity.
4. Training local staff members to lead sex equity workshops.
5. A series of workshops to disseminate sex equity information.
6. A lending library of resource material relating to sex equity for each county.

One strategy recognized as important by vocational education directors is the use of workshops. Effectively designed workshops have been instrumental in disseminating information about attitude change in various exemplary programs nationwide. Workshops can be designed for administrators, teachers, students, etc. Workshops for each of these groups are discussed below.

In designing workshops, it is important that the sponsor be perceived as trustworthy and having good intentions. For this reason,

local staff should be included as both workshop planners and leaders. The activities included in the workshop should be based on the existing attitudes of the audience. In so doing, it is important to remember that not all awareness activities are appropriate for every audience. In addition, follow up activities should be planned that are consistent with the goals of the workshop. A useful strategy is to think of workshop design in terms of the goals of the workshop. For example, networking to identify the most pertinent information and materials for a particular workshop is an excellent way to demonstrate the networking process.

One target group for sex equity workshops could be school and county administrators. When designing workshops for these people, an awareness of the need for sex equity policies must be created. In-service training should help administrators understand the provisions of the law. Administrators should also be taught to identify opinion leaders within the state and local community, utilize appropriate public relations media, disseminate appropriate materials to teachers in a manner that will enhance their use and develop affirmative action plans.

Administrators should be encouraged to build in sex equity as a part of their overall policy development. This may require the aid of an outside consultant. It may also provide a change for local administrators to link with the ongoing efforts of the state education agency with reference to the dissemination of the information relating to the Vocational Education Amendments. These linkages may include

identifying how the state education agency addresses provisions for sex equity in updated five-year and annual plans, identifying whether optional sex equity related funding categories have been funded, linking to civil rights groups that are educating the community on how to monitor legislation and understanding how other sex discrimination laws affecting education are disseminated. In addition, workshops for administrators could include information on the following: law and compliance regulations, strategies to overcome bias, materials for teacher workshops, program planning and evaluation, model programs, administrative and school practices such as hiring, and instructional resource materials.

There are many elements of the sex equity issues of which vocational education teachers should be aware. One type of workshop could be developed to train vocational educators in the skills necessary to develop and adapt materials. This could include acquainting teachers with existing non-sexist materials, assisting in the acquisition of materials, and developing materials for use by students, parents and community.

In addition, workshops could be designed to assist vocational education teachers in defining specific problems. Topics could include facilitating the awareness, recruitment, and access to vocational education programs by both sexes and establishing a placement service. Workshops on establishing placement services could include information on: 1) working with administrators to clarify the necessity of secondary institutions to assume some

responsibility for placement; 2) becoming aware of sections of the vocational education legislation that supports placement activities; 3) implementing special programs for training job developers for working in conjunction with industry to develop non-traditional placements; and 4) developing presentations for the small non-government contractor-type employer to raise awareness levels and encourage them to place students in non-traditional areas.

Workshops can also be used to attract post-secondary students. Information dissemination to students through workshops could include: 1) increasing the knowledge of advancement and/or retraining oppotunities; 2) identifying formal and informal mechanisms for advancing opportunities and developing a job information network; and 3) identifying existing opportunities for basic job training.

In addition to workshops, other strategies are useful when working with secondary students. Potential vocational education students need to be made aware of the importance of increasing non-traditional enrollment in vocational programs. This can be accomplished by working through established vocational education student organizations, having successful role models serve as guest speakers, and involving more students in non-sexist career exploration programs. Students also need to be provided supplemental non-sexist materials for classroom use.

Students and teachers also need to be taught to establish links to business and industry to communicate the necessity of recruitment

and retraining students in non-traditional vocational education programs. This process includes networking with established business and labor groups to gain support and commitment of students in non-traditional jobs, identifying committed business people to serve on advisory councils, and identifying the informal power structure within the community network.

Conclusion

Changing attitudes is a process that involves planning strategies for both short term interventions and long term change. Attitude change programs are most effective when they are designed to meet the needs of an identified group. To accomplish this, several skills need to be developed including needs assessment, networking, forming linkages, and evaluation. Many of these skills can be communicated through a networking process, which might include a regular newsletter-type communication, and in-service workshops.

Appendix A: Products

Product 1: Techniques of Behavior Change: A Review of Theories and Research

Product 2: Review of Successful Equity Programs

Product 3: Resources for the Implementation of Equity Programs

Product 4: Recommendations for the Acceptance of Equity Programs

Project 5: Research Report: Perceptions of Equity Concerns among Vocational Education Directors

NOTE: Each product is bound separately.